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REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND FOLLOW-UP TO THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Letter dated 13 April 2000 from the Permanent Mission of the Sudan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request you to circulate the enclosed memo* as an official document of the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 4.

(Signed) Ibrahim Mirghani IBRAHIM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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* The annex is reproduced as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex

The Government would like to state the following: -

1. We have carefully studied the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights contained in document No. E/CN.4/2000/12 dated 28th December 1999. We were perplexed at the conclusions reached in Paragraph 59 of that report in which it was stated, and I quote (one example of a country where traditional slavery persists in Sudan). End of quote. We deeply regret such reference.

2. We categorically reject this conclusion which, we believe, is premature, imprecise and incriminating. We are convinced that such a conclusion is based on wild and unsubstantiated allegations by some motivated circles whose only aim is to tarnish the image of my country and to benefit from unlawful enrichment through donations. It is indeed unfortunate that this reference is a mere repetition of similar allegations leveled against Sudan in the last few years by a particular NGO whose status with ECOSOC was withdrawn last year. This reference in the report of the High Commissioner is contrary to the decision taken by this august body in its 55th session that viewed the case in Sudan as abduction, and not SLAVERY as referred to in the report.

3. We would have expected the esteemed High Commissioner to, at least, recognize the genuine efforts and the positive measures taken so far by my government to address the problem of abductions instead of jumping to such serious conclusions on such a sensitive issue.

4. The cases of abduction which my country had already recognized are part of the negative outcome of the ongoing civil war. They take place in areas under the control of the rebel movement. The government is currently engaged with the UNICEF and the European Union and some international NGOs to address this issue with a view to bringing an end to this phenomenon of abductions.

5. In recognition of the efforts undertaken by the Sudanese Government, the European Union's office in Khartoum issued on February 10th 2000 a press release on the assistance extended to the Sudanese Committee for the Eradication of Abduction of Women and Children (CEAWC) in that release the European Union state and I quote "Giving financial support to CEAWC constitute for the European Union a concrete way of encouraging positive actions undertaken by the Government of the Sudan towards the eradication of abduction''. It also recognized that I quote "Issues of abduction are mostly related to conflict the Southern Sudan" end of quote. The Government of Canada is equally extending financial assistance to the same cause.

6. The Sudan has shown seriousness to co-operate fully with the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. I am afraid that such a reference in the report will not serve such a goal. On the contrary it may have a serious detrimental effect.

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